

Steve Reich and Balinese Gamelan

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Much attention has been paid to the impact of Ewe (Ghanaian) music on Steve Reich in the 1960s and early 1970s, owing to his immersion in the scholarship of A.M. Jones, his study trip to Ghana in 1972, and subsequent writings on the subject. This paper considers in detail for the first time his interactions with Balinese gamelan music. It fills this lacuna with a twist, taking a critical stance incorporating how the Balinese musicians with whom Reich interacted likely reacted to his music, thus giving voice to their perspective, and by considering Reich's compositions alongside analysis of specific Balinese compositions that he is known to have learned. The first part of the paper, based on research with Reich's notebooks and scores in the Paul Sacher archives in Basel, surveys the composer's thought on Balinese music, influence that can be observed—with pointed emphasis also on what was not influential. The second part considers two Balinese compositions: *Cak*, or the so-called Ramayana Monkey Chant, and *Sinom Ladrang*, a classical piece he learned directly from Balinese musician Nyoman Sumandhi at the American Society for Eastern Arts in 1973, and explains what Reich found of interest and what he eschewed.